

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed November 17, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12, 15, 16, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; claims 1-3, 9-17, 19, and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b); and claims 4-8, 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 1-23 remain pending and under consideration.

Response to § 112 Rejections

Claims 1-12, 15, 16, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The reason given for rejecting the claims was that it was "unclear as to which 'process executing data interchanging unit' sends the process executing data." It is submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would have no difficulty following the claim limitations and therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn. The following explanation is provided to aid the Examiner in understanding the scope of the claims.

Claim 1, as an example, is directed to a "process executing device in a data interchange system for executing a series of process flows among a plurality of process executing devices" (claim 1, lines 1-2). In other words, claim 1 is directed to one of many process executing devices in a system (see for example Fig. 1). The preamble recites that the process executing device recited in claim 1 is one of many process executing devices in the system which execute the "series of process flows" (claim 1, line 2).

The body of claim 1 recites that the process executing device recited in claim 1 has "a process executing data interchanging unit" (claim 1, line 4) which interacts with another process executing device in the system of which the process executing device recited in claim 1 resides. Specifically, the process executing data interchanging unit in the process executing device recited in claim 1 interchanges or exchanges "process executing data for executing a process with another process executing device" (claim 1, lines 4-5). The "process executing data interchanging unit" (claim 1, line 4) in the process executing device recited in claim 1 is not "sending process executing data to itself" (Office Action, page 2, line 23), but rather to a different one of the "plurality of process executing devices" (claim 1, line 2) in the "data interchange system for executing a series of process flows" (claim 1, lines 1-2).

If the above explanation does not make the limitations recited in claim 1 sufficiently clear to the Examiner to withdraw the rejection under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned prior to issuing another Office

Action to arrange an Examiner Interview, so that the Examiner's difficulty in understanding the claims can be addressed more efficiently than by exchanging written comments.

Response to § 102 Rejections

Claims 1-3, 9-17, 19, and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,032,124 ("Saito"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites exchanging "interprocess association information". More specifically, this is information "that associates a process executed by the process executing device with a process executed by the other process executing device based on a correspondence relation between the process executing data and the process executed by the other process executing device".

Item 10 of the Office Action asserted that server 110 in Saito corresponds to the "process executing device" of claim 1. It was also asserted that server 110 in Saito exchanges the "interprocess association information" of claim 1 (lines 11-14 of section 10). Contrary to these assertions, the servers 110 in Fig. 1 of Saito do not exchange information "that associates the process executed by the process executing device with the process executed by ... [an]other process executing device based on a correspondence relation between the process executing data and the process executed by the other process executing device" (claim 1, lines 7-11).

The only thing exchanged between the servers in Saito is a "shipping document". In a first embodiment, this shipping document includes "[i]nformation to control the delivery of the shipping document" (column 6, lines 26-27). Figure 8 illustrates this information as parts 810-823. This information includes server names, business process (BP) definition names, and entrance node names. None of the information included in this shipping document corresponds to information that associates processes "based on a correspondence relation between the process executing data and the process executed by the other process executing device". Instead, this information merely associates a shipping document with a "previous exit location" and a "next entrance location".

Figure 14 of Saito shows a second embodiment of the shipping document exchanged between servers 110. As in the document of Fig. 8, the document shown in Fig. 14 also includes information controlling delivery. Column 8, lines 25-35 explains that this control information includes a previous BP exit location, a next BP entrance location, and a previous BP call location management stack. Again, none of this information corresponds to the "interprocess association information" of claim 1.

In third and fourth embodiments, Saito discloses sending three "system documents" to servers (column 9, line 45 through column 10, line 61) and exchanging a "template" between servers (column 10, line 62 through column 11, line 42). Again, neither these system documents nor the template correspond to "interprocess association information that associates the process executed by the process executing device with the process executed by the other process executing device based on a correspondence relation between the process executing data and the process executed by the other process executing device". Because Saito does not disclose any feature comparable to the "interprocess association information" exchanged between process executing device recited in claim 1 and any other process executing device in the system in which the process executing device recited claim 1 resides, Saito does not anticipate claim 1.

Regarding claims 12, 15-17, and 19-23, Saito does not anticipate any of these claims because each of these claims includes a feature similar to the feature of claim 1 discussed above. Saito does not anticipate claims 2, 3, 9-11, 13 and 14 at least because these claims depend upon an allowable claim.

Response to § 103 Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 4-8, 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Saito in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,442,528 ("Notani"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Nothing has been cited or found in Notani that suggests modifying Saito to overcome the deficiencies discussed above. Thus, the prior art cited by the Examiner does not teach or suggest all the features of these claims.

Furthermore, the present invention provides a number of benefits over prior art systems. For example, the present invention can realize a process linkage among a plurality of systems even when a system has no mechanism for process linkage. This helps to reduce the costs required for interchanging interprocess association information and helps to easily manage the addresses to which the interprocess association information has been distributed. Additionally, the present invention allows interchanging information using non-synchronous timing.

The present invention also allows a work-flow system that does not have a mechanism for sending and receiving a process identifier to associate processes with another system among a plurality of systems only by sending and receiving data for executing a process. In

addition, since a common process identifier is not used, it is possible to associate processes with one another even when the top of a process is not determined.

Also, the present invention allows the formation of associations between processes from different corporations that normally cannot be associated. This also reduces the cost for distributing association information, allows for easier managing of address information, and greatly contributes to enhancing the efficiency for executing a series of process flows in an interprocess linkage work-flow system.

Conclusion

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with the filing of this reply, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
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